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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10 LAB-06

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R 311745Z MAY 74
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0879
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
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AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
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AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
USMISSION OECD PARIS
AMCONSUL BELFAST
AMCONSUL EDINBURGH
AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, UK, EI
SUBJECT: BOILERMAKERS OVERWHELMINGLY SUPPORT TUC
CONDEMNATION OF NORTHERN IRELAND STRIKE

REF: (A) LONDON 6472; (B) LONDON 6342

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE FIRST REPORTED UNION STATEMENT OF
SUPPORT FOR THE TUC POLICY ON NORTHERN IRELAND CONDEMN-
ING STRIKE ACTION OF THE ULSTER WORKERS' COUNCIL (REF B)
HAS COME FROM THE TUC'S AMALGAMATED SOCIETY OF BOILER-
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MAKERS, SHIPWRIGHTS, BLACKSMITHS AND STRUCTURAL WORKERS.
IT IS BY NO MEANS CERTAIN, HOWEVER, THAT OTHER TUC

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AFFILIATES WILL VENTURE TO TAKE A SPECIFIC STAND ON THE NORTHERN IRELAND SITUATION. END SUMMARY

2. THE BOILERMAKERS UNION, WHICH IS CURRENTLY HOLDING ITS BIENNIAL CONFERENCE IN SCARBOROUGH, OVERWHELMINGLY APPROVED - EXCEPT FOR ITS NORTHERN IRISH DELEGATES - AN EMERGENCY RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE TUC POLICY POSITION. (THE TUC, IN ADDITION TO CONDEMNING THE STRIKE AND BACKING A RETURN-TO-WORK MOVEMENT, HAD ALSO REAFFIRMED ITS SUPPORT FOR WHAT IT CONSIDERS TO BE THE LEGITIMATE TRADE UNION LEADERSHIP IN NORTHERN IRELAND, EMBODIED IN THE NORTHERN IRELAND TRADE UNION COMMITTEE.)

3. A LONDON TIMES REPORT OF THE BOILERMAKERS' CONFERENCE (MAY 31) DESCRIBED THE DEBATE AS "HIGHLY CHARGED AND OFTEN EMOTIONAL." IT ADDED THAT "NORTHERN IRELAND DELEGATES PLEADED WITH THE CONFERENCE TO LEAVE ULSTER TRADE UNIONISTS TO SOLVE THEIR OWN PROBLEMS, WHILE DELEGATES FROM THE MAINLAND INSISTED IT WAS THE DUTY OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN BRITAIN TO HELP THEIR NORTH-ERN IRISH BROTHERS IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE." THE BOILER-MAKERS' PRESIDENT, DANIEL MCGARVEY, ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, DECLARED THAT "THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL DOES NOT ACCEPT TERRORISM FROM THE IRA OR ANY OTHER ORGANIZATION WHICH SETS OUT TO TAKE THE LIVES OF WORKERS, OF WIVES AND CHILDREN, AND THE SOLDIERS WHO HAVE BEEN KILLED."

4. COMMENT: OTHER TRADE UNION CONFERENCES SCHEDULED DURING THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS(WHICH INCLUDE THE MUNICIPAL WORKERS AND THE AMALGAMATED UNION OF ENGINEERS) COULD ALSO DECIDE TO REINFORCE THE TUC POLICY IN THEIR RESOLU-TIONS.

5. HOWEVER, MICHAEL WALSH, A DEPUTY HEAD OF THE TUC INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT, TOLD US THAT THE BOILERMAKERS' RESOLUTION WAS THE FIRST FORMAL REACTION BY AN AFFILIATE WHICH THE TUC IS AWARE OF. WHILE EMPHASIZING THAT IT HAS A "PERFECTLY LEGITIMATE EXPRESSION OF TUC POLICY," HE NOTED THAT MOST UNIONS WOULD PREFER "TO STAY OUT OF
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THE NORTHERN IRELAND SITUATION." HE ALSO ADDED THAT MCGARVEY, WHO IS A CATHOLIC, IS "ESPECIALLY INTERESTED IN NORTHERN IRELAND BECAUSE HE HAS MANY MEMBERS THERE, PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO ARE ORGANIZED IN THE GIANT HARLAND-WOLF SHIPYARDS IN BELFAST," (TO WHICH TUC GENERAL SECRETARY LEN MURRAY LED HIS UNSUCCESSFUL "BACK-TO-WORK" MARCH, REF B).

6. WHEN WE SPOKE WITH SIR SIDNEY GREENE, TUC GENERAL COUNCIL MEMBER AND HEAD OF THE IMPORTANT NATIONAL UNION

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OF RAILWAYMEN, AFTER THE TUC POLICY STATEMENT WAS ISSUED ON MAY 22 (REF A), HIS REACTION TO MURRAY'S INVOLVEMENT APPEARED TO BE CAUTIOUS AND HESITANT. HE ALSO TOLD US AT THAT TIME THAT A NUMBER OF TUC UNIONS WITH MIXED PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC MEMBERSHIP IN NORTHERN IRELAND WERE VERY HESITANT TO GET INTO THE MIDDLE OF THE BITTER POLITICAL DISPUTE IN THAT AREA.

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